

Year in Review Well-Being

QUALITY-of-life initiatives in the United States and abroad continued to improve the lives of soldiers and family members in 1999.

Balkans Initiatives

The Army spent more than \$40 million on quality-of-life improvements for soldiers deployed in Bosnia. South-East Asia Huts — wooden buildings that house six soldiers per room and have heating, cooling and electrical outlets — were constructed so soldiers could move out of tents.

Also in the Balkans, improvements for soldiers included the addition of chapels, AAFES and morale, welfare and recreation facilities, softball fields and running tracks.

MWR specialists continued to oversee the construction of ball fields, schedule entertainment, escort performers, plan and conduct holiday observances and special events, run sports events and staff recreation centers and libraries.

By August 1999 the Army Library program had supplied more than 159,000 paperback books and 830

Army Times subscriptions to troops in Bosnia. Another 4,000 books had been delivered to troops who supported the air campaign and follow-on peacekeeping missions in Kosovo.

Two USA Express soldier show bands, composed of 15 active-duty musicians selected from the 1998 Battle of the Bands, traveled some 50,000 miles to give 59 performances to soldiers at remote military sites in the Balkans, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, England, Norway, Honduras, Panama and Haiti.

Construction Projects

At home, the Army funded construction and renovation of 13,800 “one-plus-one” equivalent, standard barracks spaces at a cost of \$695 million. Additionally, it invested \$38 million for new barracks furnishings and Congress appropriated \$135.3 million for family housing construction projects at 12 installations and \$80.7 million for construction at seven installations in fiscal year 2000.

At Fort Bliss, Texas, families welcomed a new child-development center that can accommodate 284 children. And at Fort Bragg, N.C., the largest youth center in the Army opened its doors. The \$8 million center boasts 64,000 square feet “with everything in it a kid could want,” said MWR officials. Amenities include middle-school and teen gyms, dance and martial arts studios, homework center, computer lab, fitness center, TV-conference room, piano lab and music practice room.

Overseas, U.S. Army, Europe, funded \$70.6 million of barracks modernization that adds more than 1,000 new one-plus-one standard barracks spaces for junior enlisted



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soldiers. Funds have been programmed to modernize another 1,400 spaces during FY 2000.

Additionally, the Army spent \$291 million to improve 3,000 family housing units. USAREUR expects to spend an additional \$890 million to renovate another 9,000 family housing units by the end of FY 2005.

In Schweinfurt, Germany, the 280th Base Support Battalion opened a \$4.3 million youth center. And at Camp Humphreys, Korea, soldiers and families welcomed the addition of a new community activity center. The \$9.7 million center includes a 450-seat auditorium and 25-meter indoor swimming pool.

Armywide, 14 new food, beverage and entertainment outlets opened their doors, bringing the total in operation to 25.

Improvements for Teens

Members of the Army Teen Panel, with guidance from Youth Services staff members, worked on implementing the Youth Sponsorship Program, whereby youths introduce arriving youths to their new installations.

Army Child and Youth Services officials signed a partnership agreement with Boys & Girls Clubs of America so that Army kids worldwide, particularly those ages 11 to 15, have access to the same programs and services as nearly 3 million American youths have daily. The goal is for 100 percent of Army CYS programs to be affiliated with B&GCA by FY 2000.

Family-Directed Programs

Army Family Action Plan issues resulted in the following changes: Congress doubled, from 12 to 24, the number of days that reserve-component soldiers and their families are

authorized to use the commissary. The Family Separation Allowance was increased from \$75 to \$100 per month to help offset expenses families incur when a soldier is separated from the family for more than 30 consecutive days.

And new legislation allows the Department of Defense Dependent Schools to follow State Department regulations in providing financial assistance to families assigned to locations where DODDS does not operate schools.

Another help in the financial arena came in the form of increased personal

financial-management education and counseling. All junior enlisted soldiers, before making their first permanent change of station, must now receive financial-planning counseling.

The Army also added two hours of the training to Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training.



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